

# Prepare Like A Year 11 GCSE Examination CHAMPION

## **Which are the most effective revision techniques for preparing for GCSE examinations?**

Effective revision techniques can vary from person to person, as different individuals have different learning styles and preferences. However, here are some commonly recommended revision techniques for preparing for GCSE examinations:

### **1. Active Revision:**

- Engage actively with the material. Simply reading through notes or textbooks might not be as effective as actively summarizing, questioning, and teaching the concepts to someone else.

### **2. Create Revision Timetables:**

- Plan your revision in advance by creating a timetable. Allocate specific time slots for each subject, and include breaks to avoid burnout.

### **3. Use Mind Maps and Diagrams:**

- Create visual aids such as mind maps, diagrams, and charts. Visualizing information can help with memory recall.

### **4. Practice Past Papers:**

- Past papers are invaluable for understanding the exam format and practicing answering questions under timed conditions. This helps identify weak areas that need more attention.

### **5. Flashcards:**

- Create flashcards for key concepts, formulas, and definitions. Quiz yourself regularly using the flashcards to reinforce your memory.

### **6. Group Study:**

- Studying with peers can be beneficial. Explaining concepts to each other helps reinforce understanding, and discussing different perspectives can provide valuable insights.

### **7. Break Down Larger Topics:**

- Break down larger topics into smaller, manageable sections. This makes it easier to focus and helps prevent feeling overwhelmed.

### **8. Use Technology:**

- Utilize online resources, educational apps, and interactive websites that cater to GCSE subjects. These tools can provide additional explanations and practice exercises.

### **9. Variety in Learning Styles:**

- Experiment with different learning styles. Some people learn best through reading, while others may benefit more from audio or hands-on activities.

### **10. Regular Review:**

- Regularly review previously learned material to reinforce your understanding and prevent forgetting. Spaced repetition can be an effective technique for long-term retention.

### **11. Healthy Lifestyle:**

- Ensure you maintain a healthy lifestyle with proper sleep, nutrition, and exercise. A well-rested and healthy mind is more likely to retain information.

### **12. Mock Exams:**

- Simulate exam conditions by taking mock exams. This not only helps you practice time management but also familiarizes you with the exam environment.

## What is your learning style?

- I enjoy discussing my learning with my friends.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I remember visual details.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I prefer to do practical activities.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I remember things more easily if I say them out loud.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I learn things better if I can see them.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I want to actually do whatever is being talked about or learned.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- It helps if someone explains something to me.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I like to use a pen and paper to help me with my learning.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- When I am listening, it helps if I doodle on a piece of paper.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I sometimes find it difficult to follow written instructions.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I sometimes find it difficult to follow discussions.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I like to move around while I am listening or talking.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I sometimes talk to myself when I'm learning something new.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I can understand something more easily if there is a diagram to explain it.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I often use my hands when I talk.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- If I have to memorize something, I might repeat it to myself.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I like to write down instructions or telephone numbers to help me remember them.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

- I like to touch things in order to learn about them.

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

## How to plan your revision



Which areas of your house can you cover in revision stimuli?

Next, are a few things you need to work out.....

1. How many subjects do you have to study for? \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

8) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

9) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

10) \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any subjects you feel you might need to spend a bit more time on during revision? For example, are there any that you didn't do quite so well on in your mocks, or subjects that you are intending to study at A-level and need to do a bit more work on?

---

2. Do you have any commitments during the week that are going to make revision difficult on some days? For example, if you play netball, when do you play and for how long?

Sunday: \_\_\_\_\_

Monday: \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday: \_\_\_\_\_

Friday: \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday: \_\_\_\_\_

### **So now you have this information, how do you fill the timetable in?**

1. Across the top are narrow boxes for you to fill in study times. If you get in from school at 3pm, give yourself time to chill out and relax before starting work. Rest your brain and start your revision at 4pm. So your first revision slot might be from 4-4.40pm. Take a ten-minute break after this and start your next revision slot at 4.50pm and study until 5.30pm.
2. It is up to you to decide when and what you will study. If you have football on a Wednesday night at 6pm, for example, you can just shade out revision slots then
3. Study Times at the weekends may be different – you might want to do some work in the mornings instead, so there are separate time slots for you to fill in here

### **Revision...the rules!**

- No more than 30 minutes non-stop revision at a time! No more than four sessions per night
- Have one night off a week and one day at the weekend
- Don't overdo it! Revising solidly from 4pm until midnight will exhaust you and your brain! A tired brain can't learn! Make sure you get plenty of sleep and have a proper break for meals.
- Take a ten-minute break in between sessions; get a drink, stretch your legs and give your brain a break!
- Be proactive! Simply reading notes is no help to you – makes notes, mind map and use colours! Keep your brain busy! Don't let it switch off!
- Spread your subjects out too. Don't choose to revise all three sciences one after the other on the same day. You will get bored! And make sure you use a variety of techniques. Do some note taking for one subject, some mind mapping for another and maybe try some past paper questions out for the next subject after that!
- Attached is an example of a revision timetable. Every person is different though, so every revision timetable is different – you need to work out what is best for YOU!
- Lastly, don't panic! If you are organised, you will be fine! Lots of regular revision, slotted into your normal routine, is a hundred times better than manic swotting the day before the exam!





## Revising using The Link System

The Link System is a way of learning and remembering lists of items.

It works by creating a meaningful story to link together the successive items in the list.

### **Example**

Suppose you wish to remember the sequence of planets in the solar system, in terms of their increasing distance from the Sun.

The correct sequence is: MERCURY, VENUS, EARTH, MARS, JUPITER, SATURN, URANUS, NEPTUNE,

To remember this sequence, you might create the following story:

**Freddie MERCURY sings to a goddess (VENUS). She picks up some EARTH and throws it at the God of War (MARS) who is then hit by a thunderbolt (Sky God - JUPITER) which causes Satan (SATURN) to appear. Satan has an Atomic Bomb (Uranium - URANUS) which he detonates in the sea (God of the Sea - NEPTUNE).**

### **Comments**

The Link System is relatively simple and is especially suited when you want to remember all items of a list from beginning to end.

However, the main disadvantage of the method is that you cannot easily recall items at particular positions. For example, if you wanted to recall the fifth planet from the Sun, you would need to go through the list from the beginning until you reached the required answer.

### **TASK:**

Make up your own story to help you recall these TV programmes/series:

1. The Traitors
2. True Detective
3. Fool Me Once
4. Love Island
5. Top Boy
6. Come Dine With Me
7. Boy Swallows Universe
8. Squid Game
9. The Apprentice
10. Celebrity Masterchef



## An idea for kinaesthetic learners

### Sticky-notes memory system



Starting with your list of [Key-words](#) (which you have already prepared), write each keyword on a sticky-note. You could even add a little drawing to each note - or a few words of explanation.



Stick these at strategic points around your room. For example: by the light switch – left hand side of shelf – right hand side of shelf - left-hand cupboard door - right-hand cupboard door - next to picture, etc.

Now, walk around the room, pausing in front of each sticky-note in turn and reading the keyword.



If you do this a few times, you will find it easy to recall what is on each of the sticky-notes without actually walking around the room.



You can use the system more than once to help you remember different lists of keywords. To make sure you do not get the lists confused, use different coloured sticky-notes, or different coloured pens – or a large coloured blob on the corner - or a small cartoon - etc.

## Understanding the 'Chunking technique' to help you revisit information

### What is Chunking?

- It is a technique which can improve your **memory**
- Chunking is the process of taking individual pieces of information (**chunks**) and **grouping them into larger units**

### The Power of Chunking to help you learn

- Your memory system becomes far more efficient
- It helps you to recall the relevant information in your exams
- Information becomes easier to retain and recall
- It improves your creativity

### The Chunking Process

1. Break down larger amounts of information into smaller units
2. Identify similarities or patterns
3. Organise the information
4. Group information into manageable units

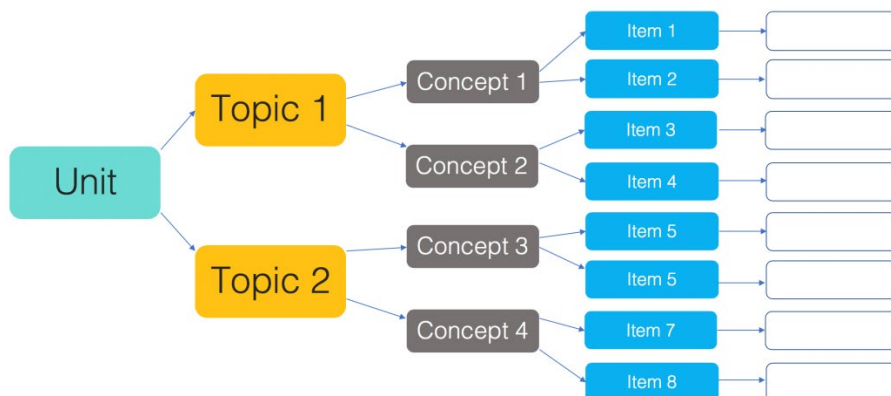
Use **HEADINGS** and **TITLES** for different sections

Use **TABLES** to summarise **LARGE AMOUNTS** of DATA

Use **BULLET POINTS** to summarise and **CLARIFY IMPORTANT POINTS**.

Combine quick **ILLUSTRATIONS** with **TEXT** to create **VISUAL ASSOCIATIONS**.

### An example of Chunking



## Are you ready to do some chunking?

### FOCUS

Chunking requires  
YOUR attention on  
the learning

### UNDERSTANDING

You need to fully  
understand information  
before chunking material

### CONTEXT

You need to go beyond  
understanding the initial  
problem or concept and  
seeing when, where and  
how to apply it

## Top tips to effective chunking

### 1. Practice:

- Challenge yourself to remember lists of things, whether a shopping list, vocabulary words or important dates.
- As you become better at remembering larger chunks of information, continue to challenge yourself to remember even more.

### 2. Look for Connections:

- As you are creating groupings, look for ways to relate them to each other in meaningful ways.
- Think about what they have in common and what makes sense.

### 3. Associate:

- Linking groups of items to things from your memory can also help make things more memorable.

### 4. Incorporate other Memory Strategies:

- For example, you might use mnemonics as a way to chunk different units of information. If you need to remember a list of things—such as buying **figs, lettuce, oranges, apples, and tomatoes**—you can create a word out of the first letters – e.g. "FLOAT".
- Once you remember the keyword, you will then be better able to recall the items represented by each letter of the acronym.

### 5. Separate your revision

- Separating revision into relevant sections can help you digest everything and remember it more easily.
- Creating **links** between different bits of information and putting them in meaningful categories can help you remember them better.

Form patterns

Develop your tactics  
connections

Make

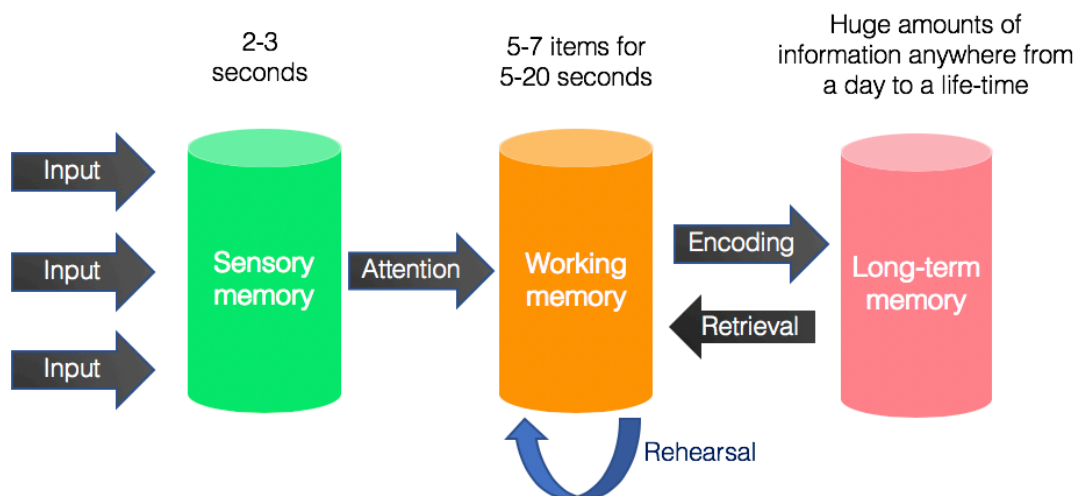
## Understanding the 'Cognitive Load' theory to help you revisit information

'**Cognitive Load**' Theory was developed by **John Sweller** out of the study of problem solving.

### What is Cognitive Load?

**Cognitive load** is the amount of information our working memory can hold at any one time. The **working memory** is where we **process information** and is key to learning.

### How do we process new information?



**The capacity of our working memory is limited.**

We must therefore manage our working memory using different strategies. **There are 3 types of working memory:**

- 1. Intrinsic Load** – this means how complex a task is. If a task or problem is really complex then it can take over most of our working memory. If a task is simple it uses less working memory.
- 2. Extraneous Load** – **these are the instructions you are given or how questions are written.** Incomplete instructions take up space in working memory and don't help you learn.
- 3. Germane Load** - This is the amount of work you put in to create a permanent store of knowledge.

**What does this mean? You should ALWAYS ASK if you don't understand something.**

## Top 10 tips to help you apply the Cognitive Load Theory to revisit and learn new information:

1. **Break the problem down into parts.** This reduces the problem space and lightens the cognitive load, making learning more effective
2. **Look at worked examples** to understand how to complete tasks
3. Take advantage of **auditory and visual channels** in your working memory
4. Start with **learning simple information** and build on it
5. **Create an environment with as few distractions** as possible so turn off your phone, music or the TV. Distractions add to your working memory
6. **Avoid overloading your brain** with too much information at one time
7. **Always review information** from your lessons as you go along because this will help improve your retention and add knowledge to your long-term memory
8. **Focus on one task or topic at a time**
9. **Rehearse the components of a complex task** so that it becomes automated, thus freeing up working memory capacity
10. **Create stories from information** to be remembered or group information into more memorable categories or more accessible chunks

### Did you know?

The mind processes visual and auditory information separately **BUT** too much visual and visual and text displayed together compete with each other in your mind.

When you have multiple sources of visual information, such as diagrams, labels and explanatory text, your attention is divided between them. This adds to the cognitive load, making it more difficult for you to learn.

### Top tips to help you revise:

- **Incorporate labels into diagrams** rather than writing text in separate boxes
- **Use acronyms to help you learn** so information can be 'retrieved' more easily from your memory
- **Try talking through the problem out loud**
- **Watch videos with animation** and voiceovers.

### How will using the Cognitive Load Theory affect your learning?

- Improve your long-term memory and knowledge
- Learn new skills more easily
- Remove unnecessary distractions
- Reduce anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed

### Don't overload your brain when you want to learn more efficiently

## Using flash cards for revision

### Using flashcards

- Using flashcards is a repetition strategy
- They are a simple 'cue' on the front and an 'answer' on the back
- Flashcards engage "active recall"

### Why flashcards can help you learn

- **They engage in 'Active recall'** – this creates stronger connections for your memory to recall information
- **They promote self-reflection** – also known as **metacognition**, which firmly commits knowledge to your memory
- **Metacognition** - When you make and use flashcards, you take control of your own learning. You have to decide what to put on each card, how often you're going to use them, and then evaluate how well you know the information on each card
- They can **help you memorise facts quickly**
- **Drilling** - flashcards help you to practise the same information over and over again - and as we know, practice makes perfect

You need to 'be smart' when making and using flashcards to make sure you are effective....

### How to make flashcards

1. Ensure that the flashcards have a **question or key term** on one side and the **answer or definition** on the other
  - The flashcard must work the memory
  - If flashcards only contain notes, then no **retrieval practice** will be happening
2. Ensure the right questions and knowledge are on the cards
3. Keep information as short as possible
4. Write clearly. You should be able to read what you wrote at a very quick glance
5. Use different **coloured cards or pens** to categorise your flashcards. For example, use a different colour for each subject or topic. This can help your brain to categorise information better
6. Make your flashcards as soon as you've learnt the topic in class

Studies have found that it's more effective to **review a whole stack of cards in one sitting** rather than to carry them around with you and glance at them every so often

## Being smart when using flashcards

- 1. Use Spaced repetition** - review your cards at specific, increasing intervals: for example, on Day 1, Day 2, Day 4, Day 8 and so on. Spaced repetition works because it activates your long-term memory, while leaving small breaks in between studying uses your short-term memory.
- 2.** Make sure you have a **'thinking pause'** after picking the card up and reading the question, then turn it over to read the information.
- 3.** Once you get an answer right using your flashcard – **DO NOT DISCARD IT!** You need to keep **repeating the question** even if you get it right multiple times – otherwise it will fall off your memory.
- 4.** As well as retrieving your knowledge, **try writing the answer or definition in your own words and giving examples.** This will help your learning and recall.
- 5. Try 'interleaving'**. Once you have several decks of flashcards for different subjects and topics, try mixing them up. This will test your knowledge across subjects in a single session. Make sure **you are confident** enough to do this every so often.

### Using a system to revise with flashcards

The **Leitner system** is a well-known and very effective method of using flashcards. It's a form of **spaced repetition** that help you study the cards you don't know more often than the cards you already know well.

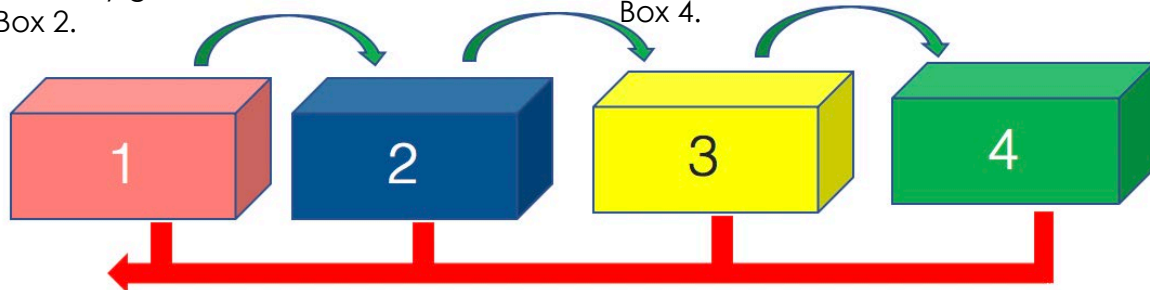
#### Leitner System – The Method

All flash cards start off in Box/Stack 1. As you review the cards, each card you answer correctly goes into Box 2.

If you give the wrong answer the card stays in box 1.

When you review cards in Box 2, if you still get it right you move the card to box 3 and so on until all cards are in Box 4.

If you get a card wrong in any box, it goes back to Box 1.



- The key is that the cards you know less well are reviewed more frequently than the cards in the higher boxes.
- You now must choose the frequency at which you review each box.
- **For example** - Box 1: Every day, Box 2: Every 2 days, Box 3: Every 3 days, Box 4: Every 4 days

## Flipped learning

### What is flipped learning?

Flipped learning is **the pre-lesson preparation**, reflection and questioning that pupils undertake to help inform a teacher's planning. (Mazur, 1997)

### How does it work?

Prior to a lesson a teacher could direct you towards **specific resources** (often online media) that you need to **digest and respond** to.

### What could your teachers ask you to do?

- They may **tell you what topics are coming up** in the next week and you can do some pre-lesson work.
- They could **ask you to read around an issue** and then use the **thinking hard templates** to transform your learning.
- They may give you **videos to watch** and to make notes from

### How flipped learning can help you?

- You attend the lesson with a great deal of **knowledge and many questions**, ready to further your understanding
- You are in control of your learning and performance
- It improves your questioning skills
- You become independent with your learning
- You can support each other to learn
- Technology can enhance your learning experience
- It makes lessons more purposeful to you
- You have **more time to discuss complex concepts** during lesson time
- You are able to **apply your learning** through problem solving and participation in collaborative tasks

Preparation is very important if you are to get the most out of a flipped learning opportunity

### How can you prepare for flipped learning?

- Research the topic area
- Make notes on the key points
- Watch videos with friends and discuss the key themes
- Complete any pre-class tasks and note down any questions
- Write your own revision questions (with answers) based on what you have learnt
- Produce a mind map showing the connections between different concepts



Being proactive means taking responsibility for your life and actions rather than just watching how things happen

### **Help make the most of flipped learning opportunities by being proactive...**

- Think ahead to the next lesson or topic
- Take action rather than wait for your teachers to tell you
- Focus on prioritising your work
- Set yourself some realistic goals
- Participate actively in your learning and out of lessons
- Stay consistent and be motivated

### **Summary - quick guide to help 'flip' your learning?**

**Find** out what your next topics will be by asking your teachers

**Look** out for media or activities which could help you understand new topics

**Identify** key questions to ask in the lesson

**Prepare** for your next lesson by being proactive and making notes

## Understanding the 'Interleaving' technique to help you revisit information

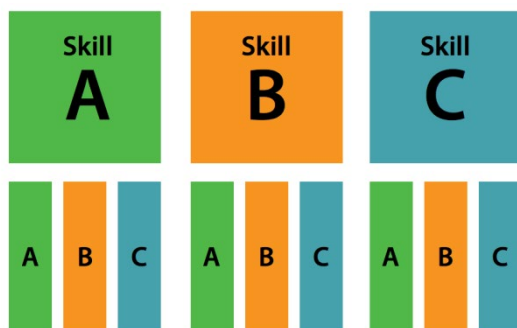
### What is Interleaving?

- **Interleaving** is a method to use when revising, to help you remember more for the exam and to understand it better as well
- It is about what **you do with your time** when revising

### How does Interleaving work?

Learning is spread over time rather than in concentration on narrow topics one after the other.

#### Blocking vs Interleaving



Pan (2015) says '**Mixing it up boosts learning**' compared to more traditional methods of block learning where students master one topic before moving on to the next in preparation for exams.

### What are the benefits of Interleaving?

- Strengthens memory recall
- Your brain is continually changing focus and attempting to find different responses to bring into your short-term memory
- By revisiting material from each topic several times, in short bursts, you can increase the amount you remember in the exams.
- Each time you revise information it strengthens your memory recall

### How to apply Interleaving

1. Break units down into small chunks and split these over a few days rather than revising one whole topic all at once
2. Decide on the key topics you need to learn for each subject
3. Create a revision timetable to organise your time and space your learning

**Focus on quality and not quantity- short, targeted bursts are more effective**

**Do little and often, and mix it up every day!**

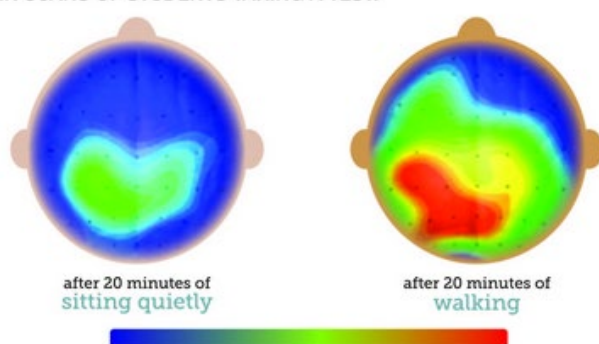
## Keeping active during revision

Did you know that regular physical activity affects the brain, it can...

- Boost your memory
- Improve your concentration
- Help reduce stress
- Lengthen attention span
- Improve cognitive brain function
- Improve your ability to focus for longer periods of time

Physically active students have more active brains

BRAIN SCANS OF STUDENTS TAKING A TEST:



**Red** areas are very active.

**Blue** areas are least active

### Exercise can improve your exam performance

- Exercise triggers the release of various hormones and chemical compounds in the body

**Serotonin** – involved in regulating your sleep cycles and boosting your

**Dopamine** – positively influences learning and your attention span.

**Norepinephrine** – affects motivation and mental stimulation

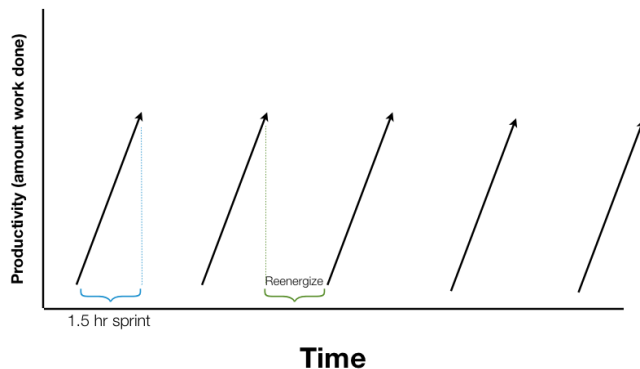
### Why is it important to take breaks during revision?

- You're less likely to get distracted while you are revising
- It's much better to spend 60 minutes revising well and 10 minutes on a break than to spend longer, half the time revising and half playing with your phone.
- Breaks actually make you work more effectively. After all that mental work, your brain needs a rest.

## How can you build exercise in your breaks?

- **Schedule regular breaks during your revision.** This could be 60 minutes of revision, followed by a 10-minute break. Exactly what schedule is best varies from person to person
- Use your break for **something relaxing and refreshing**, but which won't distract you from getting back to work
- Do something that **involves getting up from where you're revising and moving around**

### During revision - work in 60 to 90-minute intervals



Your brain uses up more glucose than any other bodily activity. Typically, you will have used most of it after 60-90 minutes.

So take a break, get up, go for a walk, have a snack, and do something completely different to recharge.

Exercise helps to oxygenate the brain and **release tension**, helping you to **keep calm, mentally relax** and **study more efficiently**

### Find a routine that works for you

- **Be flexible.** Fit your exercise around your revision timetable, and find what works for you
- **Shorter intense exercise** is great during the exam period as it doesn't take too long
- **Take regular walks** during the day to help you stay fresh and active

### Top tips to take care of yourself

- Exercise regularly
- Eat well
- Sleep well
- Relax often
- Socialise and connect with others
- Take time out for you

## Spacing and timing of revision to help you learn

**Did you know?** The brain requires a physical “**prompt**” in order to keep something in **long-term memory**. Otherwise, it is designed to **let it go**.

### What is ‘Spacing’?

- Spacing is a revision technique which is all about **spacing out your revision** so you don't get swamped and overwhelmed
- It means introducing **time intervals** into your revision sessions as well as spacing out the days which you use to revise for topics
- To commit something to memory, it takes time and repetition.

### Why is spacing beneficial?

- Doing something little and often – **spacing** – beats doing it at once, or cramming.
- The time in between revision allows you to forget and re-learn the information, which cements it in your **long-term memory**
- It cements information into your long-term memory
- We can learn more information over time than in one longer session
- It helps you revise more efficiently

### Optimum spacing

- Research suggests there is an ‘optimal gap’ between revision sessions so you can retain the information.
- If the test is in a month, you should review the information around once a week. If the test is in a week, create time once a day

Time to the test	Revision Gap
1 Week	1-2 days
1 Month	1 week
3 Months	2 weeks
6 Months	3 weeks
1 Year	1 month

## Create the perfect revision plan using the spacing technique

1. **Organisation:** determine where you need to focus your time – e.g. which subjects, topics, what you know, what you struggle with etc.
2. **Planning:** map out what you are going to revise and when. Use a timetable or revision planner to do this. Choose a mixture of a subject's topics to focus on each day to make sure you are spacing them out
3. **Review:** build in different revision techniques to help you do some quick 5 – 10-minute reviews of your topics throughout your revision plan. E.g. reading through notes, highlighting information, making post-it notes
4. **Transformation task:** These are 30 minute activities to help you take in information. For example, writing summary sheets, flash cards or mind maps for topics
5. **Practice testing:** test yourself on the area that you have reviewed such as with quizzes or by testing yourself with a friend.
6. **Exam questions:** complete an exam question or questions on the area you have reviewed and mark this yourself, using a mark scheme

Five hours of time, spent in smaller chunks and spaced periodically, is a far more effective way to learn something than five hours spent the night before

### Top tips to manage your revision time

1. Know what your **revision goals** are and **set aside blocks of time**
2. Don't work too much – **work smarter, not harder**
3. Establish **good habits** and a structured **revision routine**
4. **Don't procrastinate-** don't waste precious time worrying or thinking about what to do –**just do it!**
5. **Review** your work – **prompt your brain** with short review exercises

**To commit something to memory, it takes time and repetition**

**Three things I will do as soon as possible after this session:**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**Notes:**

**Notes:**